A Night Without Stars

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A Night Without Stars

By Wayne Miller (wmiller17@houston.rr.com)

Many thanks to Mike Z for his great editor.

I'd also like to acknowledge J.R.R. Tolkien's works, to which this campaign so obviously owes a credit.

This campaign may be played as a sequel to "The Scent of Evil" or stand-alone. It is intended to be played with 3 heroes and experienced players.

Using the basic campaign rules, this campaign assumes that the players have completed the first three quests in the previous campaign. Therefore, players should receive 800 gold coins each at the start of each scenario. The Overlord should begin with 3 additional cards and 3 threat tokens per player.

Players are allowed to purchase silver and copper items at the game start.

The Tomb of Acerak

In this quest, the players must corner and kill a teleporting Arch-Lich.

The Forgotten Ancient

In this quest, the players must deal with a room that is hard to enter and exit.

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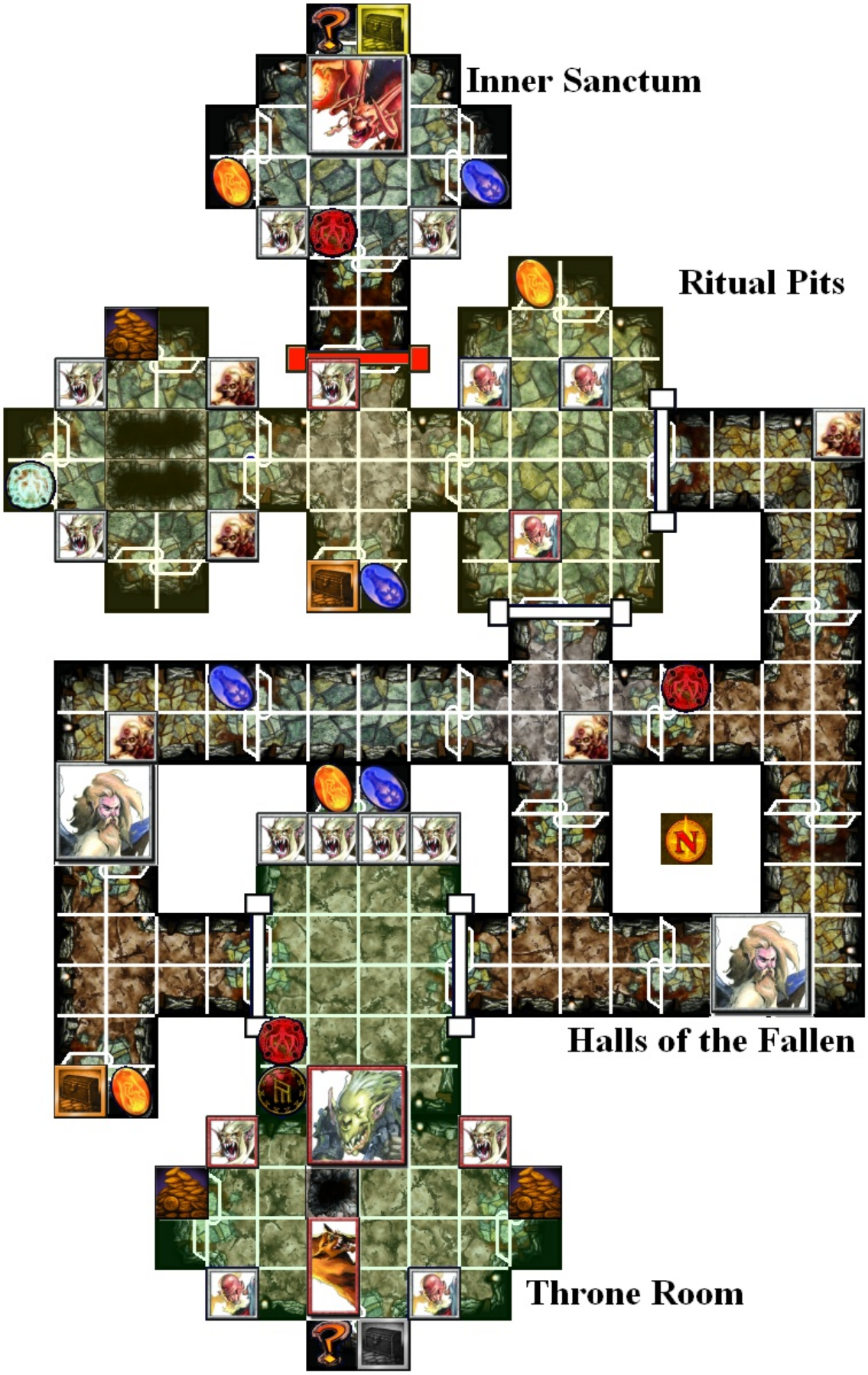

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The Tomb of Acerak

By Wayne Miller

Scenario Background

"Acerak was powerful in life, even more so in unlife. It is believed that he was once a member of the Serran Order that betrayed the Serran's at Fellstone Cavekeep. If there is anyone living or dead who would know where to find the Rune Gem, surely it is he."

"Acerak attracts those to him that crave power. He is likely to have many powerful creatures to serve him."

"Even if you can defeat his minions, remember that Acerak is a very powerful Lich -- there is no doubt that he has many powerful magics to destroy you. I do know that he has built a Throne of Bone from the fallen bodies of great wizards. This Throne enhances his power -- if you can destroy it, you will weaken him greatly."

Months of searching for Acerak's tomb has led you to this forsaken, foggy swamp. Rising from the mud, you find a low, unpresuming hill with freshly-lit torches at the entrance to an old barrow. A shallow stone stairway leads downward.

Mission Goals

Your goal is to slay the Arch-Lich Acerak. You have 5 conquest tokens, if you ever run out of conquest tokens, Acerak has triumphed.

Treasure Chests:
Copper 1-3: 1 Conquest Token, 1 Curse, 1 Copper Treasure

Silver 1: 1 Conquest Token, 1 Curses, 1 Silver Treasure
Silver 2: 2 Conquest Token, 2 Curses, 1 Silver Treasure
Silver 3: 2 Conquest Token, 2 Curses, 1 Silver Treasure, 100 Gold

Gold 1: 2 Conquest Tokens, 2 Curses, 1 Gold Treasure, 100 Gold
Gold 2: 3 Conquest Tokens, 3 Curses, 1 Gold Treasure

Acerak

Acerak has the same stats as a master sorceror with these changes: Move 3, Not Undying, Blast 1.

At any time during the Overlord's turn, Acerak may teleport to any square in the dungeon for 9 threat tokens. Acerak may teleport to unrevealed areas in the dungeon, but doing so does not reveal those areas. Acerak may not open doors that open to unexplored areas.

Acerak has Wizard Shield: Whenever Acerak is attacked, he may avoid all damage and effects from that attack, before armor is considered. The first time in the game he uses this ability, it costs the overlord 1 threat token. The second time in the game it is used, it costs 2 threat tokens. The third time in the game, it costs 3 threat tokens. Each time it is used by the overlord, the cost increases by additional threat token (e.g. using this ability the 12th time would cost 12 tokens for that single use).

The first time Acerak uses Wizard Shield:

With a simple motion, Acerak raises his hands. An arc of blue energy deflects your blow.

Acerak's soft airless laugh taunts you, "How can you harm me? All that you do is mere futility. Stay a while. Hope in vain. Die in anguish."

If Acerak begins the Overlord's Turn in the Inner Sanctum

(Read this text the first time it occurs. The players do not need to be in the room)

A low, distrubinging hum resonates through the halls. Pausing for a moment to listen, you hear the sound of Acerak's chanting carried in the still air of the tomb.

The Overlord receives one Threat Token. The Inner Sanctum does not need to be revealed for Acerak to qualify for this bonus.

If Acerak begins the Overlord's turn on the Throne of Bone

(Read this text the first time Acerak is on the throne. The heroes do not need to be in the same room.)

You feel a sudden change. The air is colder, the chamber is darker. The stale stench of death touches your nose. Something terrible has happened; a storm of evil is brewing.

The Overlord receives one additional card. The throne room does not need to be revealed for Acerak to gain this bonus, but he MUST stand on the same square as the encounter square representing the throne of bone to qualify. Once the throne of bone is destroyed, Acerak may no longer use this ability.

The first time Acerak teleports

Acerak cackles, "Pitiful idiots. Did you think you had caught me? Did you think you could finish me? I'm not so easily taken." With that, he vanishes in a blue flash!

If Acerak is finally killed.

Sensing a weakness in Acerak's shield, you press a final strike. Acerak raises his frail bones up to invoke his mystic shield, but to no avail! Your blow strikes true, shattering his arms and torso. Acerak's lifeless skull rolls to the corner. The hateful glow in his eyes grows dark. He is finished; you have won.

The players receive four conquest tokens and win the quest.

Ritual Pits

A deep pit is surrounded by mysterious figures. At the far end is a skeletal wizard robed in royal colors of purple and blue. Glowing gems now burn in the eye sockets of his skull like warm embers of a fire. His soft emotionless voice calls to you, "You are too late heroes, I have already located the Rune Gem and it shall be my prize not yours. Tsavoroth has promised me great power, and I intend to claim it. You have only come to meet your death. Allow me to introduce you."

Halls of the Fallen

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This long, twisting hallway has many painted frescoes illustrating Acerak's many victories over his enemies. In Acerak's long years, it is clear that he has won many victories against men, dragons, and even kings and their armies.

Throne Room

This somber, dark room is illuminated by soft candlelight. A decorated throne of bone dominates the far end of the room, flickering with energy. Perhaps if you could get close to the throne, you could destroy it.

That task will not be simple. An imposing hell hound sleeps at the foot of the throne. The other guardians of the hall step out of the shadow, and the battle begins.

When the player ends their turn on the encounter square in this room:

With each blow, you can feel the dark energy in this place diminish. You smash the throne of bone to tiny pieces.

Remove the encounter square. The heroes gain one conquest token.

Inner Sanctum

This appears to be Acerak's laboratory and personal chambers. Robed beastmen work quietly lighting candles in the room. Various bookshelves, desks, and tables are pushed efficiently against the walls (indicate the encounter squares). A well-mannered, handsome demon stands with his arms crossed at one end of the room admiring some of Acerak's personal treasures.

"Ah-ha," he says mildly and politely as he turns to you with a slight sneer. "Zamarak sends his regards from beyond. I had hoped to have the opportunity to get acquainted with you." His smile fades as his hands brighten with magic energy, "Then again, why say hello when I can simply say goodbye..."

When a hero ends his turn on the encounter square, or if the heroes win:

You spend a little time searching Acerak's personal effects:

First, there is a journal written in a carefully written hand:

Finally, I have enough nightstones to complete the enchantment. It does seem, as I suspected -- Asmodian still has the Rune Gem. How indeed could it be elsewhere? That behemoth has had it since time was young. I have sent my envoy to request it, but I have received no response. I believe that Zamarak too has sent his couriers, out of suspicion that it still lies there with the Ancient Flame.

Even so, this places me in a dilemma. I must not restore the Rune Gem to Zamarak until I have discovered the truename of Tsavoroth. He, like all the fellhost of the void are quick to promise and quick to forget. I shall have my reward one way or another.

If my envoy does not send word soon, I shall travel there myself to bargain with Asmodian.

Second, you find a short desk covered in parchment. Most of the documents are either worthless or unreadable. Some of the papers appear ages old, and have become brittle or rotten with time. Among them, there is an interesting map of the Urza desert. In the middle of the deep desert, there is a rocky mountain, alone amidst the sand. It is clearly labelled in perfect script, "Asmodian's Lair."

Finally, there is a beautiful mahogany bookcase with many books and other texts. On one of the shelves is a map sealed in a lovely ivory tube is labelled, "Tsavoroth's Place of Judgement." You look quickly at the map to see that it is a small island in a place farther than you have ever travelled. Indeed, to you it seems to be the very edge of the world.

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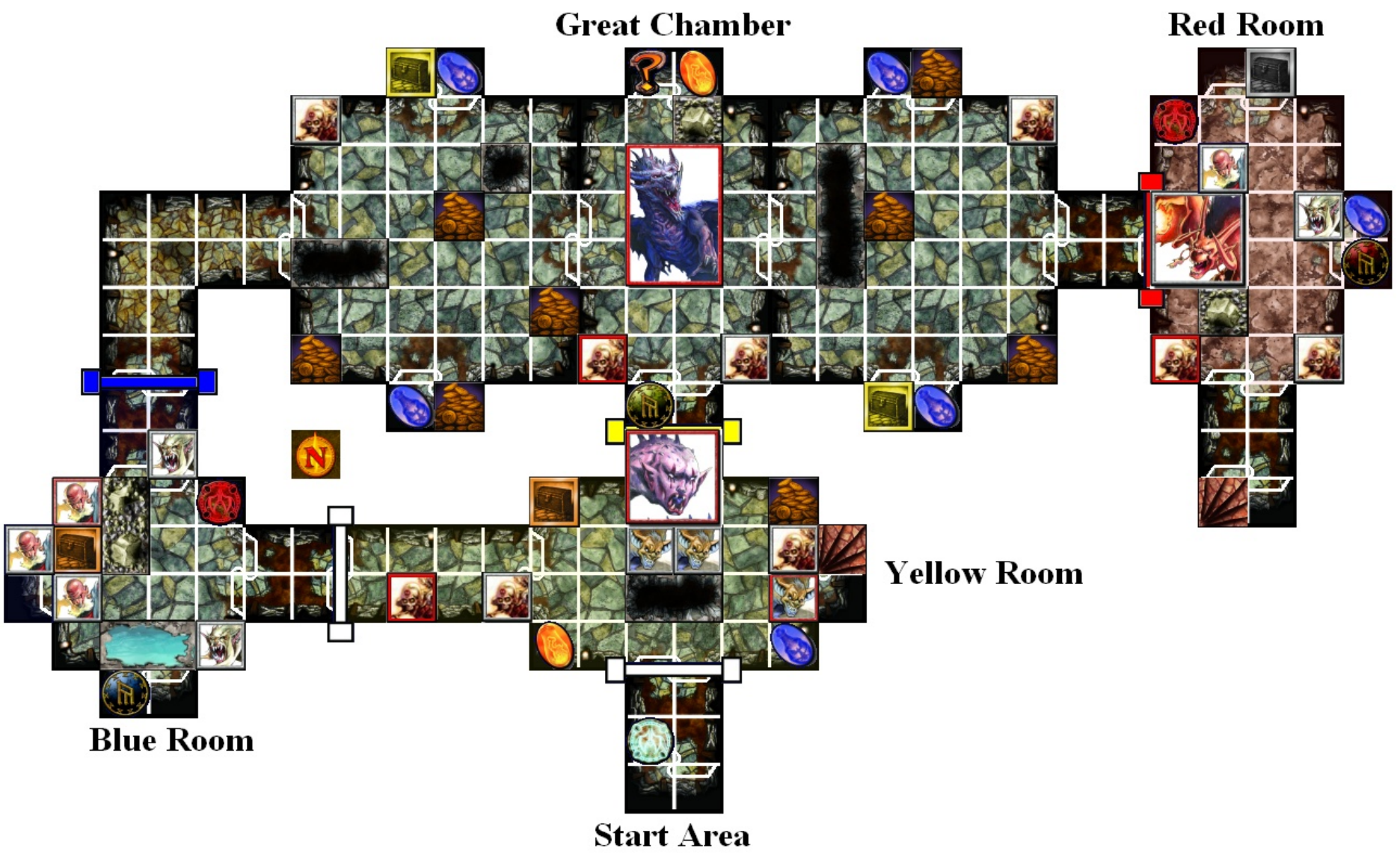

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The Forgotten Ancient

By Wayne Miller

Scenario Background

The high priest welcomes you back from Acerak's tomb, "Asmodian is a name not often mentioned in present times. Many say he is mere legend -- meant to symbolize cruelty in old tales."

In ancient times, the Serran order did battle with Tsavoroth, Lord of Cruelty. The war was so long and terrible, that it scorched the earth and made stars fall from the sky. Some say the night was without stars for centuries until the Heaven Queen mended her garment of starshine.

"Many say one such star that fell was the Rune Gem, or sometimes called the Fellstone by the Serra. This great gem, was protected for many years in Fellstone Cavekeep in safety and secret. It is not known how Asmodian came to know of the existence or location of the Rune Gem, but then, it no longer matters. What is known is that Asmodian flew to the cavekeep on a night without stars and did battle with the Serra that ultimately robbed them of the Fellstone. Some say he was aided by a traitor, some have said it was Acerak."

"The sages believe that Asmodian still slumbers deep beneath the burning sands of Urza s desert with his precious treasure. You must understand -- Asmodian is drawn by the Rune Gem in an unnatural way. His lust for it keeps him in life he cannot bear to part with it. Do not underestimate his terrible vengeance and unrelenting pursuit when you take it from him."

"Asmodian the Ancient Flame is not to be trifled with. His magic is powerful, and his mind is very clever. He will seek to divide you and kill you."

"Who can say what agents Zamarak or Acerak have already sent to fetch it to reap its power. We cannot -- the world cannot -- take that chance. You must journey immediately to Asmodian's chambers and recover the Rune Gem. Once you have it, we must travel to the Edge of the World and see it destroyed. I shall send my most faithful followers with you to watch over you.

After months of journeying across the burning desert with a small caravan, you make yet another camp in the sand. Around the fire, eating a small meal, the Caravan Master comes to you, "The scouts have seen the rocky hill you described. If we are truly near the lair of the Ancient, then we must go no farther. We will wait here for your return."

The next morning, while the air is still tolerable before the sunrise, you strike out across sand to the small, lonely mountain in the distance.

Mission Goals

To win this quest, you must recover the Rune Gem from the lair of Asmodian. You may slay Asmodian for additional glory, but it is not necessary to win the quest. You start with 5 conquest tokens.

Treasure Chests:
Copper 1-3: 1 Conquest Token, 1 Curse, 1 Copper Treasure
Silver 1-3: 1 Conquest Token, 2 Curses, 1 Silver Treasure
Gold 1-2: 2 Conquest Tokens, 3 Curses, 1 Gold Treasure

Start Area

Wide, gently downward-sloping corridor ends at an ornate door. Beside the entrance are words in common tongue are etched neatly on the wall in ancient words,

"The writing in the stone is ancient and worn, "Here rests Asmodian the Flame and his Beloved in the Sleep of Ages. Those who intrude upon these grounds shall face death. Those who dare enter his bed chamber to wake him shall face worse."

The Yellow Room

A rather impressive Naga rises from her coil at the far end of the pit. Her chilling voice hissing, "You are not invited here, adventurer -- only the dead are welcome." She smiles coldly, "but don't worry -- life is a sssimple problem that I can sssolve for you."

The Red Room

This room is bathed in a warm red glow. A black-skinned demon cranes his head from behind a pillar of red granite, "I have waited for this door to open for four hundred years. You shall not wait with me."

The Blue Room

At the end of this cool, pleasant grotto are a group of sorcerors discussing something quietly. Their cold eyes peer at you from the darkness.

Great Chamber

This is an enormous cavern filled with gold, jewels, and a very large dragon. A soft magical glow surrounds a large gem (indicate the encounter square) that must certainly be the Rune Gem.

A dragon larger than you could ever have imagined turns his head to you, and speaks pleasantly, "Were Our warnings not enough? Thou hast come into Our home? Thou hast stolen Our treasures and slain Our servants? Thou hast come to Our bed chamber to steal Our beloved and take Our life?" Asmodian lifts his mammoth body, raising his head so high it nearly disappears into darkness.

"FOOL! We are choked with RAGE! How insolent thou art to steal from US! Our sleep awakened for THIS?

"Our scale is harder than diamond, Our flame hotter than a

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furnace. And now thou shalt have the brief pleasure of being burned alive by Asmodian the Flame."

Important: Asmodian doesn't like too many creatures around his treasure. The Overlord may not spawn monsters inside the Great Chamber Area (they may be spawned outside and move inside).

Asmodian

Asmodian has the same stats as a master dragon with 8 additional health and 9 armor. In addition to the special abilities of a master dragon, Asmodian has Command, Knockback, and Fear 3.

If Asmodian is killed:

The final blow slips between a small separation in Asmodian's scales. In pain, disbelief, and rage, Asmodian makes a final desperate attempt to to seek revenge -- slapping his tail and snapping his teeth. His death howl shakes the chamber as he stumbles to the floor and falls. His feeble attempt to rise fails. Resigned to death, Asmodian grows quiet, his eyes settle upon the Rune Gem one final time.

He whispers, "Avenge me, Beloved. I shall love you until the end of all worlds."

The players receive 4 conquest tokens, but must still retrieve the Rune Gem from the dungeon.

The first time a player suffers knockback from Asmodian's breath

Hot red flames erupt from Asmodian's mouth blasting a crackling hot wind. The black acrid smoke forms evil black tendrils that wrap and cling to your form. These coils of smoke suddenly grasp tightly and fling you upward into the chamber like wet cloth.

Burning and gasping for breath you fall to the hard floor. Asmodian chuckles in a sinister tone, "There is no escape from me -- not even death. When my flame cleans the flesh from your bones, you'll spend your unlife in service to me like the others."

Once the Great Chamber has been revealed, the Overlord may spend 3 threat at any time to use the ability below.

Mysteriously, the rune door slams shut as if somehow commanded by Asmodian.

Close any rune door. Note the ability may be used more than once in a turn. It may be used in the middle of a hero's turn -- namely immediately after a hero has opened a door, but before he has moved through it. In this way, it is possible for the Overlord to keep the rune doors closed provided he has sufficient threat tokens.

Before activating any monsters on the Overlord's turn, and if all rune doors are closed

A dark glow surrounds the rune on the door. The colors shift and twist. To your horror, the color of the rune changes! Now a new rune key will be necessary to open the door!

The Overlord may exchange the rune doors with each other (the other rune doors) as he sees fit.

When the players end their turn on the encounter square:

This fist-sized faceted gemstone is the brightest and clearest green gem you have ever seen. Etched on each facet is a glowing rune. Just looking at the gem makes you covet it -- as if you've wanted this very thing your entire life and never known it.

Remove the encounter square. The hero in the encounter square receives the "Touch of Death" relic token to represent the Rune Gem. The Rune Gem may be equipped as a "One Hand" (but cannot be used as a weapon), or it may be placed in a pack. If the player has no room in his pack, simply place the Rune Gem in the same square as the hero.

Asmodian nor any other monster may pick up the Rune Gem.

Important: The Rune Gem does not have the abilities of the "Touch of Death" -- the counter is only used to show possession.

If the hero carrying the Rune Gem is killed:

The blow strikes hard, you feel yourself growing numb; your body collapses to the hard dungeon floor. Your last thoughts fall to the Rune Gem, fumbling to hold it for a last time.

The Rune Gem does not return to town with the dead hero. Place the Rune Gem marker on the board where the player died. The gem may only be picked up by a hero, never by a monster or familiar.

If a hero returns to town with the Rune Gem and Asmodian has been killed

You escape the dungeon back into the cool dry desert night. The world is quiet under a sky full of stars. You see the fire-light of the merchant caravan in the distance, but you choose to go another way -- strangely fearful that someone will discover your precious gem and rob you of it.

The players win the quest and receive 1 conquest token.

If a hero returns to town with the Rune Gem and Asmodian has NOT been killed

You spring forth from the Asmodian's lair, the thunder of dragon's mighty step not far behind. Racing into the cool desert night, flames reach out from the mouth of the cave, but Asmodian is too far behind. Running as fast as you can for the rock and dunes, you hear Asmodian shrieking in rage -- he has grown too large over the centuries of sleep to leave his lair! Tearing at the rock, you hear the mighty dragon splitting the very stones apart to pursue you.

Racing across the rocky ground, you find a small cave only big enough for a handful of people. No later than the last of you has slipped inside does Asmodian break free, spiraling skyward. Drawn to the caravan in the distance, you watch in horror as Asmodian engulfs them all in flame. After only minutes, the massacre is over. Asmodian -- somehow sensing the Rune Gem is not present -- circles higher and higher into the night.

Hours later, Asmodian circles farther and farther away, still howling in desperate anger. Even so, it is not until two days later you feel safe enough to leave.

In the cover of darkness, you search the caravan for survivors. No one survived Asmodian's fury. Shaken by the thought of the sleeping beast you have unleashed on the world, you run away into the night clutching the precious

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Rune Gem to your chest.

The players win the quest and receive 1 conquest token.

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